

574,584 veterans in the 11-county Philadelphia region. The next decade will challenge the National Cemetery Administration to accommodate World War II and Korean War veterans, as well as veterans from the Vietnam era. Each of our veterans deserves the honor of burial in a national cemetery. In order to best be able to honor and remember their loved ones, families need to have access to those gravesites within a reasonable distance from their homes. The best opportunity to meet this need in the Philadelphia area is to dedicate existing federally owned property in the Valley Forge National Historical Park.

The Valley Forge National Historical Park is dedicated to the earliest American military veterans and the long winter of their suffering during the War of the American Revolution. Although no battle was fought on this land, it is nevertheless symbolic of our Nation's military valor and triumph over adversity. The bill will designate 100 acres of the 3,600 acre National Park for use as a national cemetery. The section of land north of the Schuylkill River would be the ideal location for the national cemetery. This area contains no historical markers and is separated from the rest of the park by the river. Dedication of this portion of the Historical Park as a national cemetery would thus add a solemn and appropriate place to honor and remember those who have served this country in the military.

Mr. Speaker, I urge swift consideration of this bill as an important and timely opportunity to honor our nations' military veterans.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, because of official business in my District (27th Congressional District of Texas) I was absent for rollcall votes 147–154. If I had been present for these votes, I would have voted as indicated below.

Rollcall No.—Vote: 147—"yes"; 148—"yes"; 149—"yes"; 150—"yes"; 151—"Present"; 152—"no"; 153—"no"; and 154—"no".

CONGRATULATING THE RIDGEWOOD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce on its 75th anniversary as one of the leading business/civic organizations in New Jersey. The Ridgewood Chamber has played a leading role in making Ridgewood the first-rate place to live, work and raise a family that it is today. I know—I have lived most of my life in Ridgewood and raised my family there. From President Lawrence Keller through each and every business that is a member, these are people who truly care about their community.

The Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1898 as the Businessmen's Asso-

ciation of Ridgewood, changing its name in 1924. The mission of the organization has remained the same over the years—to "develop and advance the business, professional and civic interests of Ridgewood."

Today's Chamber of Commerce is a voluntary organization of individuals, businesses, professionals and organizations dedicated to advancing the commercial, financial, civic and general interests of Ridgewood. The Chamber acts as a public relations counselor, representative to local government, a problem solver, information and resource center, and coordinator of business and professional programs and promotions. The Chamber promotes the maintenance of a dignified and successful business and professional district.

Membership represents almost every facet of our business/professional community, including merchants, doctors, lawyers, bankers, newspaper editors, business owners/managers, civic leaders and clergy. A 10-member Board of Directors sets goals and policy carried out by the five officers—President Lawrence Koller of Koller Financial Group, Vice President Joan Groome of the YWCA of Bergen County, Treasurer Kenneth Porkka of Kenneth Porkka & Co., Secretary Sally Jones of Valley Hospital and Past President Tom Hillmann of Hillmann Electric. Executive Director Angela Cautillo is responsible for day-to-day operations.

The Chamber of Commerce brings a sense of unity to our business community. Ridgewood is a regional business center, growing larger and stronger every day. The Chamber successfully pursues its mission to promote Ridgewood and its businesses through effective advertising, planned events, community service, networking and education of the public. The Chamber is true to the entrepreneurial spirit of our free enterprise system. That spirit has been and always will be at the heart of our American democracy.

The Chamber's activities go beyond just promoting the business interests of our community. The Chamber annually sponsors Easter in Ridgewood, the Ridgewood Car Show, the Santa Parade and the Downtown for the Holidays festival. These are all programs that enrich our community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce on a successful 75 years and wishing the Chamber and its members many more years of continued success and prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO THE KANKAKEE-IROQUOIS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HON. STEPHEN E. BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give tribute to the Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission, which for the past 25 years has improved the economics, health, and well-being of the residents in North Central Indiana.

The Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission (KIRPC) has been an integral part in generating community and economic development opportunities for the citizens and local communities of Indiana since July 2,

1973. The KIRPC continues to be a positive influence upon the regional economic well-being by helping communities and residents in North Central Indiana maintain their economic viability.

The Commission has been instrumental in providing a means of communication between local, state, and federal government organizations and the citizens of North Central Indiana. The KIRPC monitors an Overall Economic Development Plan that helps to identify the needs of people and businesses within the community, while reducing government waste. In addition, it has been a valuable partner in helping the region's development through such programs and services as grants-in-aid; grants administration; comprehensive planning; and forums to address local issues. The KIRPC has also helped the people in the region with transportation needs by providing the Arrowhead County Public Transit Service which provides more than 150,000 routes annually.

The KIRPC was key in helping bring Head Start to the area in 1997. The Head Start program now provides services for 122 children and supplies necessary developmental services for the children; all within an education setting.

I commend the Kankakee-Iroquois Regional Planning Commission for its unwavering support to the region by providing a wide range of services and programs. I wish the Commission continued success in its endeavor to make a difference in the lives of the citizens of Indiana.

TRIBUTE TO FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES F. MUELLER

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to First Lieutenant James F. Mueller of Houghton Lake, Michigan, who will retire from the Michigan State Police on May 29.

I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives and my constituents in the 4th Congressional District to First Lieutenant Mueller's distinguished career.

For three decades, First Lieutenant James F. Mueller has served his country and his community. Soon after graduating from Valparaiso University in Indiana, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and fought for his country in the fields of Vietnam, earning numerous service awards.

He returned home in 1971 and began his career with the Michigan State Police. In 1987, he was promoted to First Lieutenant at Houghton Lake Post #75. He soon became more than a state trooper to the residents of northern Michigan; he became a role model to young children and a key figure in the creation of the D.A.R.E. drug use prevention program in local schools.

In addition to his professional career, First Lieutenant James F. Mueller's extensive personal community service proves his dedication to his neighbors. He is a member of the Lions and Kiwanis, has served in the United Way and Houghton Lake Merchant's Association and has served on the board of directors for the St. John's Lutheran Church, the River House Shelter and Roscommon County 911.